

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TANANA 01124 261535Z

53

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 AID-05 IGA-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01

OES-03 EUR-12 /064 W

----- 063725

P 261330Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7381

NASA HEADQUARTERS WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TANANARIVE 1124

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NASA PFOR US MA

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA AND NASA STATION: EMBASSY COMMENTS

REF: A. TANANARIVE 1123; B. TANANARIVE 0460; C. TANANARIVE

0775

SUMMARY: EMBASSY WISHES TO CONFER WITH GENERAL ANDRIAMAHAZO BEFORE MAKING TACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON RESPONSE TO RATSIRAKA'S DEMANDS FOR BACKRENT. DEPARTMENT AND NASA COMMENTS REQUESTED SOONEST. EMD SUMMARY.

1. EMBASSY WISHES TO CONFER WITH GENERAL ANDRIAMAHAZO CONCERNING RATSIRAKA'S RENEWAL OF LATTER'S BACKRENT DEMANDS (REFTEL A). GENERAL ATJ AS DIRECTOR OF MILITARY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, BUT HE IS STILL IN GOVERNMENT AND HAS INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO BE HELPFUL ON NASA STATION (REFTEL B). GIVEN PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA'S SENSITIVITIES, CHARGE PLANS TO APPROACH ANDRIAMAHAZO THROUGH DEFENSE ATTACHE WHEN LATTER MAKES COURTESY CALL ON GENERAL ON/ABOUT JUNE 30.

2. BASED ON CONVERSATION WITH RATSIRAKA JUNE 25 IT IS CLEAR THAT HE IS FULLY FAMILIAR WITH US POSITION ON BACKRENT, ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF STATION, AND US AID EFFORTS. HE HAS BEEN REPEATING HIS TALE OF NASA PROMISES ON BACKRENT FOR SO
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TANANA 01124 261535Z

LONG, IT MAY REPRESENT GENUINE MISUNDERSTANDING OR HE MAY

NOW SIMPLY BELIEVE IT HIMSELF. DURING CONVERSATION ON JUNE 25, WHEN CHARGE BEGAN TO QUESTION HIM CONCERNING NASA "COMMITMENT," HE SAID THAT HE KNEW THAT THIS CONVERSATION AT NASA HAD NOT BEEN RECORDED BECAUSE AMBASSADOR MENDENHALL HAD TOLD HIM THIS, BUT THAT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING AND WAS WHAT HE TOLD PEOPLE WHEN HE CAME BACK FROM US.

3. ACTUAL FACTS IN SITUATION ARE AT THIS POINT LESS IMPORTANT THAN RATSIRAKA'S PERCEPTION OF TRUTH WHICH EMBASSY SEES AS FOLLOWS:

-) US IS WEALTHY COUNTRY THAT CAN EASILY PAY BACKRENT DEMANDS EVEN IF NASA ITSELF CANNOT;

B) NASA STATION IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO US AND HAS STRATEGIC VALUE WHICH SHOULD BRING HIGH PRICE;

C) MADAGASCAR IS OF INTENSE STRATEGIC INTEREST TO GREAT POWERS HENCE US SHOULD WISH TO PRESERVE ITS POSITION HERE AND FEEL THREATENED BY HIS REFERENCE TO POTENTIAL SOVIET TRACKING STATION;

D) HE HAS RECEIVED A COMMITMENT FROM NASA FOR BACKRENT (HE MAY NOT ACTUALLY BELIEVE THIS);

E) HE IS UNDER LOCAL POLITICAL PRESSURE TO EXTRACT A HIGH PRICE FOR STATION (THIS COULD BE TRUE BUT MORE LIKELY HE CREATED PRESSURE HIMSELF).

4. SEVERAL OPTIONS SUGGEST THEMSELVES IN TERMS OF RESPONDING TO RATSIRAKA'S DEMANDS:

A) STRAIGHTFORWARD REJECTION OF HIS DEMANDS COUPLED WITH STATEMENT THAT IF DEMANDS ARE IRREVERSIBLE STATION MUST CLOSE. THIS ENTAILS HIGH RISK, BUT MIGHT PERSUADE RATSIRAKA THAT US HAS GONE AS FAR AS IT CAN TO MEET GOMR DEMANDS.

B) RESTATEMENT OF US POSITION COUPLED WITH STATEMENT THAT US WISHES TO REOPEN NEGOTIATIONS. THIS COULD LEAVE MORE ROOM TO MANEUVER AND WAS APPROACHED IN EMBASSY DRAFT CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TANANA 01124 261535Z

RESPONSE TO FOREIGN OFFICE NOTE OF MARCH 26 (REFTEL C). EMBASSY RESPONSE WAS NEVER SENT, HOWEVER, ON ADVICE OF GENERAL RDIAMAHAZON WHO SUGGESTED THAT GOMR WAS SUFFICIENTLY PREOCCUPIED TO PERMIT US TO SAFELY IGNORE NOTE.

C) INTERIM REPLY STATING THAT NASA CANNOT ADDRESS DEMANDS NOW BECAUSE OF APOLLO-SOYUZ, BUT WILL DO SO IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER. THIS IS SIMPLY TEMPORIZING TO GET PAST JULY 15

DEADLINE IMPOSED BY RATSIRAKA.

5. VARIOUS OTHER POSSIBILITIES MAY EXIST WHICH NASA HEAD-
QUARTERS IS IN BETTER POSITION TO JUO3. FOR EXAMPLE,
SCRUBBING OR THREATENING TO SCRUB TANANARIVE'S PARTICIPATION
IN APOLLO-SOYUZ MISSION MIGHT WELL TAKE SOME WIND OUT OF
RATSIRAKA'S SAILS BUT IT MAY BE TOO COSTLY AN ALTERNATIVE.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY WILL FORWARD ITS JUDGMENT AS
TO BEST APPROACH AFTER CONSULTATION WITH GENERAL
ANDRIAMAHAZO. REQUEST DEPARTMENT AND NASA COMMENTS ASAP.
ELFERS

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, TRACKING STATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TANANA01124
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750222-0316
From: TANANARIVE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750611/aaaaakfh.tel
Line Count: 127
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 TANANARIVE 1123, 75 TANANARIVE 0460
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 AUG 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <12 DEC 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA AND NASA STATION: EMBASSY COMMENTS
TAGS: PFOR, US, MA, NASA
To: STATE NASA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006